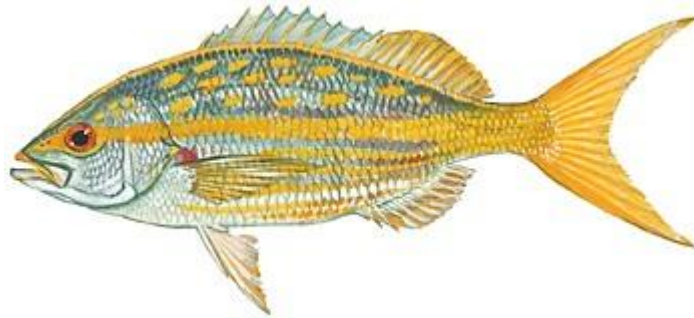


**Frequently Asked Questions for a  
Temporary Rule to Increase the Commercial Annual Catch Limit for  
Yellowtail Snapper in the South Atlantic**

**November 2012**



**Why is NOAA Fisheries Service increasing the commercial annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic?**

- The state of Florida recently completed a new population assessment of the yellowtail snapper stock in the southeast region of the U.S.
- The new assessment indicates the yellowtail snapper are not overfished or undergoing overfishing, and current catch limits may be increased without jeopardizing the health of the population.
- The commercial sector for yellowtail snapper would have met the old annual catch limit and triggered an in-season commercial closure in 2012 if this temporary rule was not implemented.
- Because the commercial annual catch limit can be increased the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council requested this temporary rule to increase the commercial annual catch limit for the remainder of the 2012 fishing year.

**What is the new commercial annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic?**

- The new commercial annual catch limit is 1,596,510 pounds whole weight.
- The new catch limit is an increase of 453,921 pounds whole weight over the previous commercial annual catch limit (1,142,589 pounds whole weight).

**What is a “Temporary Rule” and why is the annual catch limit increase only temporary?**

- A temporary rule implements some management measure, or in this a case catch limit, for a limited period of time, 180 days, with the ability to extend the provisions for an additional 180 days.
- A temporary rule is often used in case of an emergency, or if temporary management measures are needed while permanent measures are being developed through another permanent regulatory action, which is the case with yellowtail snapper.

- In the case of yellowtail snapper, this temporary rule is being implemented to avoid an unnecessary closure of the commercial sector of the yellowtail snapper fishery in the South Atlantic during the 2012 fishing year.
- If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the increased annual catch limit will be made permanent at a later date through Regulatory Amendment 15 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Regulatory Amendment 15).

**How does the temporary rule affect commercial fishermen with 225 or Unlimited South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Permits?**

- This rule will allow fishermen with 225 or Unlimited South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Permits to continue to fish for yellowtail snapper until the new annual catch limit is projected to be met, or until the close of the 2012 fishing season (December 31, 2012), whichever comes first.

**What is the South Atlantic Council doing to increase the yellowtail snapper annual catch limit in subsequent years?**

- The South Atlantic Council and NOAA Fisheries are working together to develop Regulatory Amendment 15, which would permanently implement the new commercial and recreational yellowtail snapper annual catch limits.
- Regulatory Amendment 15 is expected to be implemented sometime in 2013.

**Why is the recreational annual catch limit not being increased through this temporary rule?**

- The recreational sector for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic is not in danger of harvesting the recreational annual catch limit during the 2012 fishing year.
- As of November 2012, the recreational sector had harvested 23 percent of the recreational annual catch limit.
- The recreational sector annual catch limit will be increased through Regulatory Amendment 15 if approved by the Secretary of Commerce.

**Where can I get more information on the yellowtail snapper temporary rule?**

- Contact Kate Michie of the Office of Sustainable Fisheries at [Kate.Michie@noaa.gov](mailto:Kate.Michie@noaa.gov) or at (727) 824-5305.